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October 1981, Number 73

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*The Delius Society  
Journal*

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The Delius Society  
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# Contents

*With this issue, to coincide with the release on Unicorn Records of 'The Fenby Legacy', we affectionately mark our President's 75th birthday earlier this year.*

Editorial . . . . .	3
Recording the 'Fenby Legacy' . . . . by Christopher Palmer . .	6
'A Village Romeo and Juliet' (1899-1901) by Lionel Carley . . . .	11
'Fennimore and Gerda' at Saint Louis . . . . .	17
Tales of Adventure . . . . . by E E Rowe . . . . .	20
'Delius: A Song of Summer' . . . . . by Keith Marvin . . . . .	22
'A Mass of Life' at Cambridge . . . . .	22
Forthcoming Events . . . . .	23

## Illustrations

The two photographs taken during the recording sessions for Unicorn Records' 'The Fenby Legacy' earlier this year in the Barking Assembly Hall are reproduced by courtesy of *The Times*. The photograph of Dr Fenby which appeared in the April 7th issue of that publication can be found in the Faber re-issue of *Delius as I knew him*. 8" x 6" prints of the photographs taken at those sessions can be obtained from *The Times* Photographic Sales Department (P.O. Box No 7, New Printing House Square, Gray's Inn Road, London WC1X 8EZ), each £2.00 mounted and £2.50 unmounted. The reference numbers for the series are G25448 and G25449.)

Additional copies of this issue £1 each, inclusive of postage.

## Editorial

On September 8 there were simultaneous official unveilings in London and Keele of next year's Fourth Delius Festival. While the press representation at the London launching was meagre, Mark Pargeter, the Festival Chairman, writes encouragingly that both send-offs went splendidly and that ticket sales have already started, with some applications being made for the whole week. There have been a few minor alterations to the Festival programme since details were printed in the July Journal. In addition to Delius's *Over the Hills and Far Away*, the opening concert will now include Grieg's Piano Concerto and Dvorak's New World Symphony, and in the Friday evening concert Delius's *Dance Rhapsody No 2* replaces *La Calinda*. In the press package distributed at both meetings it is stated that the Festival is to feature 'the music of Delius and of composers connected with him'. Some may feel that a few of these connections are slender indeed. Elgar had little in common with Delius and the name of Holst in particular sits rather uncomfortably on the Festival programme, his Delian pedigree being highly questionable. At the same time one can especially regret the absence of two champions of Delius, each having strong claims to be included – Grainger, whose centenary falls next year, and Havergal Brian, as a local 'Potteries' composer who moreover helped bring about the 1908 Hanley *Appalachia* performance with Delius conducting in the very hall in which the Festival's opening concert is to take place. But these reservations apart, the Festival should nonetheless be an occasion not to be missed, even if many members will only be able to attend the closing event-packed weekend.

Following on our previous issue's summary of the critical reception given to the Continental productions of *A Village Romeo and Juliet*, the July issue of *Opera* contained two opposing views that put one in mind of the old Royal Festival Hall brochure's *Point and Counterpoint* column. Of the Zurich production Gerold Fierz wrote that 'Charles Mackerras . . . proved a sympathetic interpreter of the work . . . The orchestra was directed with such care that every declamatory nuance, every small detail, was clearly and precisely defined, everything being directed towards the emotional impact. In spite of the sometimes very rich tone-colouring, the playing was always discreet, transparent and flexible, as befitted a true accompaniment to the words'.

Horst Koepler thought otherwise: 'Having disliked almost everything – apart from Ursula Reinhardt-Kiss's and Gosta Winbergh's touchingly portrayed Vrenchen and Sali respectively – about Zurich's highly over-praised production of *A Village Romeo and Juliet* (with hardly a word to be understood of its supposedly German text), having especially loathed Sir Charles Mackerras's coarse and overblown rendering of Delius's score . . . I too became a fervent admirer on January 25 when Darmstadt gave its slightly shortened and dramatically doctored production of 100 non-stop minutes duration'. Could the Swiss cuisine have upset him beforehand, one wonders?

Readers of *The Daily Telegraph* may have noted with interest on August 13 that Frank Corsaro is to produce Prokofiev's *The Love of Three Oranges* at

Glyndebourne next year. The designer will be Maurice Sendak and both will be working in this country for the first time. Delians will more readily couple Corsaro's name with that of Ronald Chase, and the most recent outcome of that exciting producer-designer partnership can be read in the report of the American *Fennimore and Gerda* première. As we go to press, another important 'first' is shortly to take place — the world première of *Margot La Rouge*, the revised schedule for the BBC recording being October 8 and 9 at the Golders Green Hippodrome. As in the case of *The Magic Fountain*, the conductor will be Norman Del Mar. No broadcasting dates have yet been announced.

\* \* \* \* \*

Ronald Kirkman writes from Geneva of a recent Swiss Radio broadcast of *Sea Drift*, with Carl Schuricht (who died in Switzerland in 1967) conducting the Stuttgart Radio Symphony Orchestra and Heinz Reyfuss as soloist. With reference to the last Journal he adds that he has twice seen the Swiss film *Romeo und Julia auf dem Dorfe* (on television and in the cinema) but has never seen the Ken Russell film. He concludes, 'I wonder if the BBC has thought of trying to sell (it) to Swiss German television in view of the interest aroused by *A Village Romeo* in Zurich last year?'

From New Zealand Jonathan Hartfield reports that 'the few scattered members of the Delius Society in N.Z. held a very successful meeting 2 years ago and would like to repeat the performance early next year'. At his request a list of our antipodean members has been sent to assist him in organising a meeting.

\* \* \* \* \*

News of one or two concerts arrived too late for the July Journal. *A Mass of Life* at the Cambridge Festival is reported on page 22. Delius's Violin Concerto was played by David Nolan on March 10 in the Philharmonic Hall, Liverpool at a public concert which formed a mid-day BBC broadcast on September 19, Vernon Handley conducting the RLPO. Vernon Handley also included *A Song of Summer* in an all-English programme with the Philharmonia on September 5 at Snape Maltings. This concert was co-presented by Capitol Radio and Radio Orwell, and the former will probably broadcast it as part of their Sunday classical music series running weekly throughout November. Radio Orwell have no immediate plans to broadcast it.

Delius's Piano Concerto at this year's Proms was a great disappointment. At the start soloist and orchestra were at odds and the performance in general only gave further point to the need of keeping Delius's music moving. Tempi were never allowed to slacken so and the structure sag in, for example, the recorded Moiseiwitsch/Sargent performance of the Concerto mentioned in Journal 70 and now obtainable from Oliver Crombie, 102 Golders Green Road, London NW11 (tel. 01-455 0066), price £4.75 + £1.75 p.&p. The LP transfer of the Percy Grainger and Ralph Leopold *Brigg Fair* piano rolls was mentioned in the last issue. The same artists' piano rolls of Delius's *North Country Sketches*

have now been transferred to LP in 'Legendary Artists Play Piano for Four Hands: Vol 2' on Klavier KS-132 (from Klavier Records, 10520 Burbank Boulevard, North Hollywood, California 91601), price \$7.98 + \$3.35 surface rate or \$5.00 airmail for international mailing. Malcolm Walker reports that *The Walk to the Paradise Garden* is included in an Australian HMV SMP-0041, Wilfred Lehman conducting the Queensland Symphony Orchestra. Looking ahead to future issues in September Julian Lloyd Webber (who can be heard in the 'Fenby Legacy' set) recorded for RCA the *Serenade* from *Hassan* (in the Fenby arrangement) with Charles Gerhardt and the National Philharmonic Orchestra. This record of works for cello and orchestra is due for release in November.

Turning to publications, an album of *Four Posthumous Songs to words by Scandinavian poets* is anticipated from Universal Edition during the last quarter of this year. The songs, numbered V/10, 14, 20 and 23 in Robert Threlfall's Catalogue, will have words in both English and German, with the Scandinavian original appearing on the fly-leaf. Also from Universal Edition, reprints are in hand of *In a Summer Garden*, *Dance Rhapsody No 1* and *Paris* study scores, the first two to re-appear in a new *octavo* format, uniform with the existing *Paris* score UE 13874, currently selling at £1.70. (A miniature score of *The Song of the High Hills* is available from them, UE 13875, at a very reasonable £1.50, as well as study scores of *Brigg Fair* 6904 and *Songs of Sunset* 6915, £3.75 and £3.15 respectively.) A reprint by the American Greenwood Press of Peter Warlock's *Frederick Delius* (in the Hubert Foss revision) is available through Eurospan Ltd, 3 Henrietta Street, London WC2E 8LU. A copy recently seen in Foyle's of Charing Cross Road, London, retailed at £13.50.

\* \* \* \* \*

'The Fenby Legacy' is rightly of prime interest in this issue, and in conjunction with this important release members are reminded of David Tall's detailed examination of the works that make up the set in his similarly titled article that appeared in Journal 61, October 1978, pp.5-20. A few back-numbers are still available of that special issue which was, like the present one, dedicated to Dr Fenby.

To conclude on a personal note, members will surely wish to join in expressing their pleasure at Estelle Palmley's return to good health. She was much missed during her absence, and she has now been designated Membership Secretary. At the last AGM, with his impending move to Nottingham and a new job, Christopher Redwood resigned from both the Committee and the post of Vice Chairman (in which he has been succeeded by Gilbert Parfitt). May we take this opportunity of thanking him for all his work on the Society's behalf.

# Recording the 'Fenby Legacy'

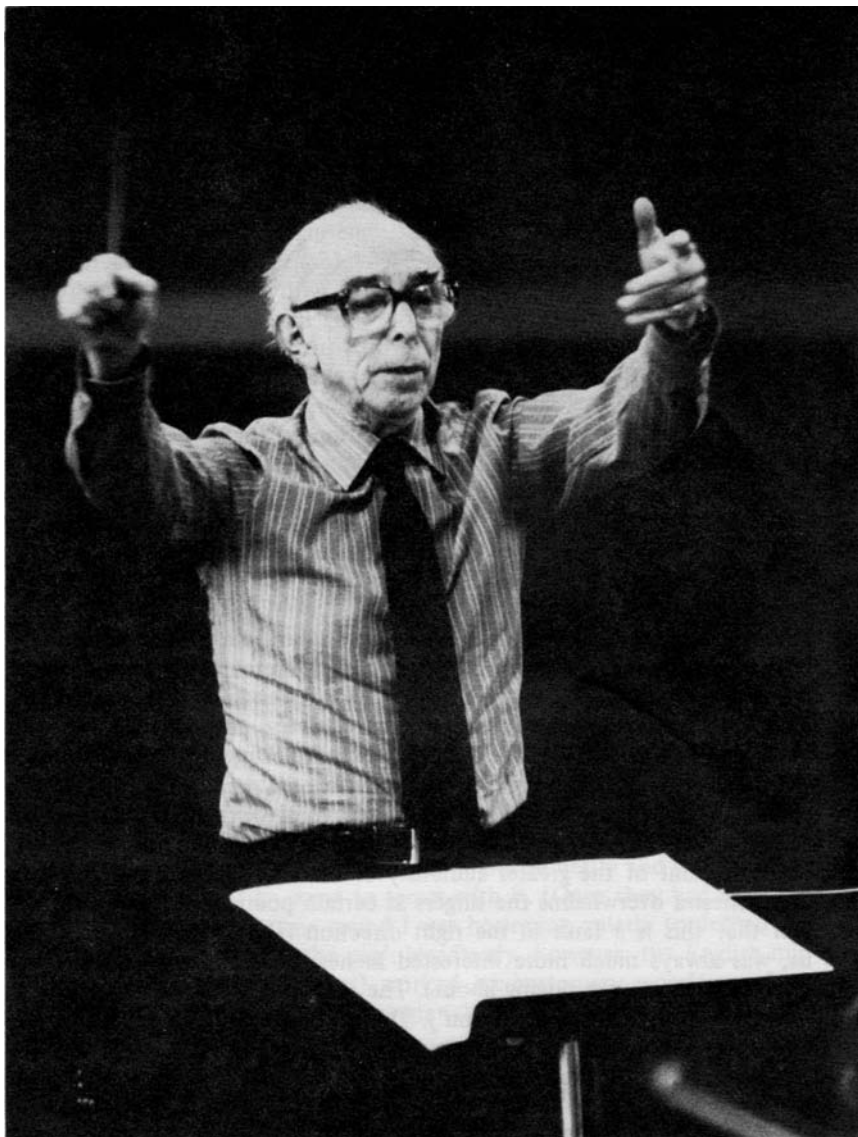
by Christopher Palmer

I have provided for the October *Gramophone* a short résumé of how the complete 'Fenby Legacy' has finally found its way on to disc, but for the sake of completeness I propose to recapitulate some of that material here (my apologies to members who are also *Gramophone* readers). It all came about in a very straightforward way. In that autumn of last year, knowing of Dr Fenby's readiness and willingness to record particularly the *Songs of Farewell*, I proposed to the Delius Trust that they sponsor a 2-record set to be devoted to the dictated works, Dr Fenby himself conducting. This would serve the dual purpose of a) preserving for posterity Fenby's interpretation of music which he himself had, in a sense, created; and b) restoring to the catalogue the *Songs of Farewell*, *Idyll*, *Cynara* and *A Late Lark*, all now deleted. The collection would of course include also the world premiere recording of *Fantastic Dance*, together with the *Caprice and Elegy*, *Song of Summer* and *Irmelin Prelude*, none of which (with the exception of *Caprice and Elegy*, recorded in 1930 with Beatrice Harrison) Dr Fenby had hitherto been given the opportunity of perpetuating on disc. The Trust lost no time in guaranteeing their enthusiastic support for the project; by a happy chance I was able to give Dr Fenby a first inkling of what was afoot on the day of his so-called 'Farewell Concert' with Julian Lloyd Webber at the Wigmore Hall last November.

It had early been decided to offer this package to the highly-regarded firm of Unicorn/Kanchana rather than one of the major companies, and a luncheon was arranged at the Festival Hall early in December at which John Goldsmith (Managing Director), his partner Nigel Brant, Dr Fenby and I pooled our ideas. Mr Goldsmith mentioned *Delius as I Knew Him* and pointed out the desirability of a reprint to coincide with the issue of the records. I had a hunch that my friends at Faber, Patrick Carnegy and Dr Donald Mitchell, would jump at the chance of acquiring the title for their catalogue did they but know of its availability; and so, happily, it turned out. (Once the release date of the record issue had been fixed, Fabers used every means in their power to speed up the production process so that the book should be ready along with the records. Incidentally, Dr Fenby regards this re-issue as definitive; anything more he means to say about Delius will be found in the context of his O.U.P. book, no publication date for which exists as yet.)

At this initial meeting we decided to break down the works to be recorded into two groups of sessions, the first to comprise *Songs of Farewell* and *Song of Summer* (which could be scheduled without reference to the availability of soloists), the second to account for all the vocal and smaller orchestral works. Accordingly the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra, the Ambrosian Singers and Watford Town Hall were booked for February 10 and 11 1981. Before that, however, Dr Fenby and I had a number of exhaustive (and exhausting!) editorial sessions on the scores themselves, which we feel were eminently worthwhile in the much-increased wealth of orchestral detail captured on the recordings as a result. Delius seemed over-inclined to rely on the presence of natural musician-ship in his performers; we preferred not to take chances and inserted such extra





*Eric Fenby conducting the Idyll at the Unicorn sessions*

expression marks as would supply any likely deficiencies (the direction *espressivo*, for instance, can give life, meaning and musicality to a phrase that might otherwise be played coldly and mechanically; hairpins too are invaluable in this respect, and Delius used them far too sparingly). Experience taught that woodwind, harp, horn and often string dynamics often needed to be marked *up*, the heavy brass and timpani *down*; we did some re-bowing of string parts over broad melodic spans to ensure fullness and consistency of sonority. Actual orchestration changes were restricted to such areas where we felt the physical *quality* of the sound could be improved (generally in the interests of textural clarity) without its actual *substance* being in any way tampered with: e.g. doubling the flutes in extreme low and extreme high registers, re-inforcing the high timpani at the end of ‘Joy, shipmate, joy!’ (*Songs of Farewell*) by the F an octave lower, adding the double-basses in unison with the cellos to heighten or rather deepen the climax of “We two, how long have we been absent – but now we return” in the *Idyll*. In all the works involving a large orchestra we invariably used two harps in the tutti. Our emendations were all made in the interests of a better realisation of the composer’s intentions; with one important exception they do not draw attention to themselves in their own right. The exception occurs in ‘Passage to you’ in the *Songs of Farewell*, where we both felt that some element of percussion was needed to give release to the enormous build-up of power at the climax (“Away O Soul! Hoist instantly the anchor”), which is surely the turning-point of the entire work. Dr Fenby hit upon (no pun intended!) the brilliant notion of a fortissimo cymbal clash on the *second* beat of the bar (“A-way [clash] O Soul”), Delius himself having used cymbals in precisely this way in *Appalachia* and the *Mass of Life*.

The recording of *Songs of Farewell* passed off with remarkably few problems. Two separate recording systems were in operation for these two sessions; digital recording with a single ‘mike’ being still a relatively untried field, we were reluctant to entrust to it a work of the complexity of *Songs of Farewell* without a safety measure in the form of a more conventional multi-mike system. (We had no such fears for the purely orchestral and vocal works.) In the event the multi-mike version of *Songs of Farewell* turned out to be the one to publish, mainly on account of the greater audibility of the chorus. Some may still feel that the orchestra overwhelms the singers at certain points, but I unrepentingly maintain that this is a fault in the right direction (Delius himself, Dr Fenby tells us, was always much more interested in hearing the ‘Orchester’ than the singers or what they were singing about). The recording went smoothly enough until we reached no.3 (‘Passage to you’). The slow-moving, high exposed triads for strings caused inevitable problems of intonation, ensemble and textural consistency, which were finally solved by having half the players put mutes on. (We also muted the strings at the end of ‘Now finale to the shore’ and in the coda of *Idyll*.) More difficulty was encountered in ‘Passage to you’ when it transpired that the set of parts furnished by the publishers had at some time been used for a performance with only two horns; essential notes in the third and fourth horns had been cued into the first and second, as a result of which much of the *original* lie of the latter had been rendered illegible. Fortunately this came to light in the first session, and we had the hour’s break before the second to repair the damage. Had it been lying in wait for us in the second



*Eric Fenby with John Goldsmith (Managing Director, Unicorn Records)*

session we should undoubtedly have needed overtime to finish everything.

The session the following day (11th) was devoted to *Song of Summer*. This was a work entirely unfamiliar to most of the orchestra and they needed longer than I had estimated to come to terms with it. (Once they had they loved it.) By the time the break came round I was beginning quietly to despair, for next to nothing usable was 'in the can'. Needlessly, however: the English mid-afternoon cup of tea (or whatever) worked its customary wonders and virtually the entire piece was recorded in a single take.

Arrangements for the second group of sessions which took place at Barking Assembly Hall on March 30th, 31st and April 2nd, proved more difficult to finalise. Mindful of the origins of *Idyll* in *Margot-la-Rouge*, Dr Fenby insisted on two singers whose voices should be robust as well as lyrical and capable of carrying their power over the full flood of Delius's orchestra at the climax. Finally Thomas Allen was marvellously well paired with Felicity Lott. Interestingly, their performance placed the relationship of the two singers in a yet different perspective from that of the two previous recordings. Sylvia Fisher played very positively the dominant role in the Barbirolli; in Meredith Davies's,

Heather Harper and John Shirley-Quirk were just about equally matched in terms of vocal sonority and power; whereas Tom Allen is to my mind the star of this particular show, which is to say that his voice is as full-bloodedly masculine as Felicity Lott's is disarmingly feminine. Allen's proud yet poignant reading of *Cynara* (for which the orchestral parts supplied by the publishers turned out to be those used for the première at the 1929 Festival, containing not only copious editorial annotations in Beecham's own hand but also evidence of the original ending, some eight bars shorter than the later published version) won the moved admiration of all, particularly Dr Fenby. Sir Peter Pears would have been ideal for *A Late Lark*, but this was scotched by the stroke he suffered over Christmas (from which, happily, he is making a good recovery). However, the moment Dr Fenby heard the mellow warmth and spontaneous musicality for which Anthony Rolfe Johnson is renowned, he realised he need look no further. Julian Lloyd Webber, having played the *Caprice and Elegy* with Dr Fenby for the BBC, was more than happy to record it with him.

The inclusion of Dr Fenby's arrangement of *La Calinda* was completely impromptu. I had a feeling that we might have some time to spare that afternoon (March 31st); so, realising that we had the right-sized orchestra for the piece, I called on my way to Barking at Boosey & Hawkes in Regent Street where our good friend Malcolm Smith had already prepared scores and a set of parts. A few hours later a sparkling performance (with a steady tempo set at the outset and maintained throughout – no easy feat) was committed to tape.

Little more comment on the mechanics of performance and recording is called for. Each piece brought its own particular problems (e.g. the too-closeness of the horns at the start of *A Late Lark*, occasional wrong notes which had persisted in the orchestral parts of various pieces despite previous recordings and performances); most, we hope, were solved more-or-less satisfactorily. It would however be entirely remiss of me not to pay tribute to certain individual members of the RPO whose solo artistry contributes so much to the enjoyment of these records – the incomparable Derek Wickens (oboe), Susan Milan and Jonathan Snowden (flutes), Jeff Bryant (horn), leader Barry Griffiths (solo violin). Delius was indeed fortunate to engage the sympathy as well as the skill of these fine musicians.

Once the tapes were edited and the sleeve-notes written, all that remained as far as Dr Fenby and I were concerned was to choose an illustration for the cover. One thing we agreed on: it had to be a seascape. Hours of searching through books of marine painting finally yielded John Brett's *Britannia's Realm*, and when later I saw it serving its practical purpose in a magnificent wrap-around format I knew we had made the right choice. It does not take account of every aspect of the recorded works (which single painting could?) but surely its keynote, like that of Delius's music, is basically serenity, *harmony* in the widest, fullest sense. And when even later I saw the scenic shots of the Scarborough coast taken by a Yorkshire television crew to pinpoint the exact spot on the cliffs where Dr Fenby determined to offer his services to Delius, and noted their uncanny resemblance to *Britannia's Realm*, I felt that, in a sense, the 'Fenby Legacy' had come full circle and had ended where it began – with 'nothing but sea and sky'.

# A Village Romeo and Juliet (1899-1901)

A brief account of Delius's operatic masterpiece  
from its inception to its first performance.

by Lionel Carley

Delius was a man who read widely and who had an ear that was finely tuned to the poetry and prose of several languages. But generally speaking he did not have the ability to express his thoughts on paper in anything but fairly pedestrian and earthbound terms. While his music could take wing, his prose had a tendency to remain firmly in common ground. At first sight then, all the more surprising for someone who claimed to believe in the close collaboration of composer and poet in the operatic field — someone, moreover, who could openly admit: 'my literature is not on a level with my music' — that his finest opera should have been composed to a text that he himself had written. But it was never originally intended that he should write his own libretto to *A Village Romeo and Juliet*; and that he finally did so, after two frustrating attempts to make use of libretti that ran counter to his muse, is perhaps a good measure of how strongly attracted he was to the story.

Delius was drawn to Keller's tale on a number of levels: it was short and simple; it dealt with outsiders marked down by a tragic destiny; it had elements of fantasy and symbolism; it was, inherently, a mockery of the bourgeois morality that throughout his own life the composer rejected; and all in all it could be treated with a kind of musical reticence and subtle shading that was the antithesis of the verismo that he claimed to detest in opera. Even the subsidiary characters in Delius's opera are largely outsiders — the vagabonds and gypsies long-considered by the composer as subjects for operatic treatment of some kind and now combined in this dream-poetic work. The fact, too, that his two main characters are little more than children perhaps additionally reflects his early interest in fairy tales: so that in his hands we have an opera that has something of a fairy-tale element consistent with such near-contemporary works as *Hänsel and Gretel* and *Pelléas and Mélisande*. But although *Pelléas* was indeed contemporary, we should remember that in the spring of 1902, when Delius first saw it (and indeed greatly admired it), it was the first Debussy he had ever heard. In the composition of *A Village Romeo and Juliet* he had in no way been influenced by this seminal work.

Just when Delius first read Keller's novella and just when he first considered it as a subject for an opera is not, I am afraid, recorded. But a letter written by a friend of his, the German artist Ida Gerhardt, on 20 September 1897, tells us: 'Delius has long had it in mind to use it as an opera'. Earlier that year he had asked the English writer C.F. Keary, who had written the libretto for his earlier opera *Koanga*, to perform the same office for *A Village Romeo*. But in the event Delius was not satisfied with the completed text and decided instead to compose the work to a fresh, German libretto, to be written by Ida Gerhardt's brother. Here again was a misjudgment, for although Karl-August Gerhardt had

a clear, logical prose style, he was unable successfully to commit the intrinsic lyricism of the story to paper, and later in 1898 *his* first efforts were also abandoned. Delius turned once more to Keary and asked him to rework his original English text, but by the end of the year the composer was almost in despair: 'Keary is awfully slow and takes a frightful amount of warming before he gets a-going. He does not seem to have got any further with 'Romeo and Juliet' and has no more 'Stimmung' about it — you have to put it all into him. He asked me to play the themes of it to him to inspire him, but I have no themes yet'.

Something like a year and a half must now have gone by since the first of these two libretti was discussed and commissioned, and still there was no music — 'no themes' — nor was there an acceptable text. Furthermore, this frustrating delay was now compounded by the composer's deep involvement, throughout the first half of 1899, in the preparations for a first major concert of his music in London. It was only in the autumn of that year that the seemingly intractable problem of an operatic-textual reduction of Keller's story was once again taken up. After the London concert, G.M. Karlyle, who had been present, warned Delius that *A Village Romeo* called for particularly careful handling and that he should not use the librettist who had written *Koanga* for him. The composer finally acted upon a decision that he had in fact taken even earlier in the year — to prepare the libretto himself — and suddenly everything fell into place. Ida Gerhards describes how, in a letter written to her brother on 13 November 1899:

'Delius has done his own libretto for *Romeo & Juliet* — after having talked & corresponded for a whole year with an English writer & the latter having finally delivered him an English libretto which was not at all what he himself felt and wanted. Some days after I arrived he suddenly sat down & wrote a delightful libretto, — it fell from him just like a ripe apple. Of course, all this could only happen because he had in black and white before him 2 libretti which he had been wrestling with for a long time, with the result that it now became clear to him how he should set about it himself. He is now composing the whole time & I believe it will be a ravishing masterpiece, it sounds quite enchanting as he plays at night'.

A period of intensive work on the opera, at last begun and under way, followed, continuing well into the following year; but later in 1900 other preoccupations saw the work put aside. In fact Delius spent the entire winter of 1900-01 in Berlin, trying, with little apparent success, to get his works published and performed. This was a particularly unsettled period for him. In his letters during the three months from November 1900 he complained frequently and bitterly of his inability to get down to work, most notably on his opera: 'I must work quietly', he wrote to his wife-to-be, Jelka Rosen, 'in a corner & then things will go all alone — This sort of life paralyses me & I am unable to work — In other words my time is entirely lost'. In February 1901, however, the indications are that he had probably, while still in Berlin, once again taken up *A Village Romeo*. 'Delius is now at work the whole time here', wrote Ida Gerhards, also in the capital, '& I delight in hearing his beautiful sounds again nearby and from afar'. Composition continued in the spring at his home in

Greze-sur-Loing, near Fontainebleau, and some time later in 1901 the opera was completed.

In considering Keller's story and Delius's musical setting of it, one should also take account of other elements that may be said to have made a contribution to the whole. A significant part of Delius's adult life had been passed in a succession of what might be termed natural idylls, from the exotic Florida plantation on the shores of the St Johns River where he lived for a year in comparative isolation – the singing of negro workers ringing in his ears – to the calm beauty of Corot's lake on whose banks at Ville d'Avray, not far from Paris, he made for some months his first home in France. There had been long periods in the Norwegian high mountains, and he now spent a great deal of time in the lovely riverside garden at Grez, where much of his finest music was to be composed. 'Here it is almost as if one were in an enchanted paradise', Ida Gerhardt had written, shortly after first seeing this same garden: 'so lonely & hidden away & overgrown'. She had loved its solitude: 'nothing could take the place of our idyll – only blossom and fragrance all around us & no so-called civilised people at all'.

In such surroundings was *A Village Romeo and Juliet* both conceived and largely written. Again we can turn to Ida Gerhardt for the reasons for this fresh impetus, which she first communicates to her brother in September 1897:

'In my humble opinion Delius has found a wonderful perfection in his compositions here in Grez – he himself says that it had never gone like this before – the tranquillity, the poetry of the landscape, as well as the continual stimulus he has through having Jelka & me around him, all give him one flight of inspiration after another. He often works till 1.30 at night – not getting up till 10 o'clock, however. I think you will like him very much – he is an artist through & through, with a fine, sensitive nature'.

A further factor that was to contribute to the compositional maturity of *A Village Romeo* was that concert of Delius's works given in London on 30 May 1899. This gave Delius his first opportunity to hear on the orchestra much of the best of his work composed up to that date, including a substantial selection from his previous opera *Koanga*. 'I must say', he wrote soon after the performance, 'that I have learned a devil of a lot in the last month – practical things which may help me when I write another opera'. Ida Gerhardt, too, refers to the extraordinary impact of this concert on the unsuspecting London public:

'Delius is a genius whose fame is just beginning, his concert was a magnificent revelation, apart from Jelka & me no-one really knew this music, – but with the orchestra it was so vastly more beautiful than we ever dreamed, & the result was that we were quite overwhelmed. Afterwards I spoke with a musician who told me that there were things in it which were among the most magnificent ever thought & written'.

Everything, then, seemed ready for the birth of Delius's masterpiece, even if its composition was to take longer than expected. Indeed, the music in its gestation took as long as the libretto had done. This libretto, of all his operas, is arguably the best. It had, after all, two earlier versions, one in English and one in German, from which it could draw and take shape. Later English revisions

have often been unfeeling and have, overall, failed to improve on the original.

With the opera finished, there seemed no immediate prospect of its performance. Florent Schmitt was commissioned by Delius around the beginning of 1902 to make a piano score, just as he had done for his friend's three earlier operas, *Irmelin*, *The Magic Fountain* and *Koanga*. (Another friend, Maurice Ravel, was to make later that year the piano score of Delius's immediately-following opera, the one-acter *Margot la Rouge*). Then Robert d'Humières produced a French translation of the opera, under the title *Le Jardin du Paradis*. Meanwhile, Delius obtained permission from the Keller estate for the English libretto some time to be published. But there is no evidence of any interest in Switzerland at large in this new 'Swiss' opera by a little-known English composer, even after a well-noticed performance in Basel in June 1903 of Delius's *Mitternachtslied Zarathustras*, for baritone solo, chorus and orchestra. This had been given by his one notable contemporary Swiss conductor-protagonist, Hermann Suter, at the Tonkünstlerfest of the Allgemeine Deutsche Musikverein.

'I hope you have cultivated your patience assiduously', wrote Grieg at the beginning of September 1903. 'For a composer of operas must have 50 times more of it than other musicians! He must also be an optimist by nature, otherwise he'll worry himself sick, if not to death'.

Delius fulfilled at least one of Grieg's two qualifications: he *was* an optimist ('Ich bin eine bejahende Natur'), even if patience is not a virtue one instinctively ascribes to him. But at least he had now to *cultivate* patience, as Grieg advised, and his first operatic reward was the Elberfeld production of *Koanga* in March 1904. The most important links between this production and that of *A Village Romeo* three years later were Fritz Cassirer and Hans Gregor. Gregor had already decided to try to found a Comic Opera in Berlin, and Cassirer, his conductor at the Elberfeldt Stadttheater, was to go with him. Cassirer was one of the first conductors of note to study the full score of *A Village Romeo* (this was in the early summer of 1904), and like Max Schillings shortly afterwards he acknowledged with enthusiasm the work's originality. Hoping to capitalize on the interest created by the three performances of *Koanga* in Elberfeld, Delius tried to find a publisher for *A Village Romeo* later in 1904 – but without success, as polite but negative responses from publishers in Berlin and Leipzig show. But now at least he had a promise that the work would be performed if all went well with Gregor's plans. He must have been well-pleased with the prospects for his opera when he heard the good news from Oskar Fried later in 1905: the Komische Oper had opened 'with success'.

Although it had been envisaged that *A Village Romeo and Juliet* should be one of Gregor's earliest productions, it was for the moment deemed prudent by the Komische Oper management to put on for the most part works of more popular appeal, in order safely to establish the new company on a sound financial basis. September 1906 was proposed for the production, and Delius wrote to Grieg with the news. 'I am heartily pleased to hear that you are active', came the reply; 'I still have the good fortune to be able to admire & love other artists & other art, & so it would be an event for me to be able to attend a performance of your opera in Berlin. But whether I shall be permitted to travel to Germany next winter is a very big question'.



Another close friend Delius was anxious to see there was the Norwegian artist Edvard Munch: 'We will be coming to Berlin in September. An opera of mine is to be performed – perhaps you can come'. For various reasons the production had to be further postponed, and the composer was unable to give a positive reply to Hans Haym, conductor in Elberfeld of so many first performances of his works, when the latter wrote in September to ask: 'What are you up to? When is R. & J. coming to the Village? i.e. to the Capital? Have you any news from Suter?'. In October Delius wrote to Grieg to say that he was hoping for the opening about Christmas; but once again he was to be disappointed. Haym wrote a few sceptical lines at the beginning of November: 'Gregor seems to have got himself rather on the wrong tack with his Comic Opera. Kills the finest operas with his clever production tricks. The music suffers. Apparently he recently announced his intention to give die Walküre as 'intimate' opera! Cassirer doesn't seem right for it either. Oh well, it would still be something to be welcomed if he gave your opera. But how much longer do we have to wait?'

Not long, for all was soon settled, and by the end of 1906 Delius was in Berlin attending rehearsals of his opera. He was to stay longer than expected, as the première did not finally take place until 21 February 1907. The libretto to be sung was, it seems, substantially to be a translation into German by Jelka Delius of her husband's original English text. And the decor was to be by Karl Walser, one of the leading Swiss artists of the day. On 15 January he wrote to another friend, the pianist Theodor Szántó: 'The orchestral rehearsals of my opera are going very well', a sentiment he was to reaffirm early in February, adding: 'I have very much to do. The scenery will be wonderful'. And on 10 February he told Szántó: 'Rehearsals every day from 10 till 4. The première takes place on the 21st inst. Final rehearsal – morning of the 20th'. Enquiries were indeed coming in from all sides. One of his greatest (and youngest) admirers, Carl Schuricht, had written in January to Jelka Delius:

'Is it 'A Village Romeo and Juliet' that the Comic Opera is bringing out? I am truly delighted about this and wish you all the best, particularly where the production is concerned! – The impression 'Sea-Drift' made on me will never leave me (would *so much* love to have the score). – Strange that a composer of genius, even more one of such original aspect and warm, deep feeling, should find it more difficult to break through than the average scribbler who follows the latest fashion. – One would think that people should consider themselves fortunate when someone comes along who in the midst of the poor world conjures up for their eyes and ears a new land of undreamed-of beauty from his own rich fantasy – people ought to be proud and joyful for such revelations of a creative human spirit, grateful at the same time! . . . . Would you perhaps be kind enough to drop me a line to say *when* 'Romeo' is taking place? I would so much like to go, if I'm in sufficient funds!'

Haym, unable to come, and still somewhat sceptical, wrote: 'May the performance not only succeed scenically, there being no doubt about this considering Gregor's speciality, but may it also do justice poetically & musically to your genius'. Oskar Fried, Paul Bekker, Max Chop, among others, all asked

for tickets to rehearsals, as did critic August Spanuth of the 'Berliner Bureau der New-Yorker Staats-Zeitung', adding: 'I shall certainly cable to New York about the performance'. To Delius's disappointment Grieg was unable to come; nor indeed was Hermann Suter among the friends able to make the journey to Berlin. On 14 February he wrote from Basel with his regrets.

In the event, the world première of *A Village Romeo and Juliet* may be said to have fulfilled Delius's expectations. The Berlin musical establishment mostly condemned the work, the younger critics loved it. 'The opera', he wrote to Szántó, 'has attracted a lot of attention. Result excellent'. And his wife wrote to another friend, the sculptor Auguste Rodin: 'They played my husband's opera in Berlin and it has set off violent controversies all through Germany; there is only enthusiasm or hate — But I will tell you all about it later'. As a composer of opera, in a style far removed from the conventions of the day, Delius was at last being taken seriously. Furthermore, a vocal score of the opera, with German words, had been published in Paris ('Propriété de l'Auteur', but we have not yet been able to establish the date of its publication). And now the Berlin firm of Harmonie, who had started in 1906 to publish Delius's major works, began within a month of the première to make arrangements with the composer to print a revised vocal score of the work. However, it was to take the company until 1910 to bring out this revised score, together with supporting orchestral material.

How appropriate that Gottfried Keller's and Frederick Delius's *A Village Romeo and Juliet* should at last have been staged in Switzerland. It was in Zurich in 1910 that Delius first met a young man who was to become one of his ardent admirers: Béla Bartók had attended a performance conducted by Volkmar Andrae of the English composer's orchestral piece *Brigg Fair*, and wrote to Delius on his return to Budapest: 'Here I am so alone, have apart from my only friend Kodály no one at all to talk to, and have not met anyone anywhere else to whom from the very beginning I have felt so close as you. And because of this the Zurich Festival was one of the most beautiful times of my life.' A year later he took Kodály to a performance in Vienna of Delius's *Eine Messe des Lebens* and they both found this strange new music deeply impressive and in parts highly original.

It is surely extraordinary — but certain, nonetheless — that even today many who travel to Zurich in Bartók's footsteps will find this music quite new to their ears, quite strange, possibly unique. One hopes that they will nonetheless share Sir Thomas Beecham's judgment of it as 'lyrical and consistently poetical, with a recurring strain of tenderness more fully present than in any other operatic score of the past fifty years. The orchestral texture throughout is a joy to the ear and has that subdued warm tone suggestive of dark gold or rich velvet of which this composer alone has the full secret.'

# **‘Fennimore and Gerda’ at Saint Louis**

## **TRIUMPHANT AMERICAN PREMIERE**

### **Cast List (in order of appearance)**

Niels . . . . .	Stephen Dickson
Fennimore . . . . .	Kathryn Bouleyn
Erik . . . . .	David Bankston
Consul Claudi . . . . .	Walter DeLear
Frau Claudi . . . . .	Gayle Greene
Offstage Voice . . . . .	Thomas Arnold
A Lady . . . . .	Deborah Harrison
Sportsman . . . . .	Nicholas Solomon
Town Councillor . . . . .	James Kalkbrenner
Tutor . . . . .	James Daniel Frost
Distiller . . . . .	Walter DeLear
Maid 1 . . . . .	Brenda Everett
Maid 2 . . . . .	Kathleen Butler
Lila . . . . .	Dorothy Markwort
Ingrid . . . . .	Kimberly Lane
Marit . . . . .	Brenda Everett
Gerda . . . . .	Kathryn Gamberoni
Skinnerup . . . . .	James Kalkbrenner
Conductor	Christopher Keene
Stage Director	Frank Corsaro
Film, Projections & Sets	Ronald Chase
Costume Designer	Ronald Chase
Lighting Designer	Craig Miller
Wig & Make-up Designer	Paul Alba
Dates of Performance	June 3,6,12,18 1981
General Director	Richard Gaddes
Production conceived by	Frank Corsaro and Ronald Chase

‘Producing an opera by Frederick Delius must be like trying to catch moonbeams in a bottle, but Frank Corsaro and Ronald Chase have succeeded at it again,’ wrote Donal Henahan in *The New York Times* after the Saint Louis American première of *Fennimore and Gerda* in June. To which John Von Rhein in the *Chicago Tribune* added that ‘it is hard to imagine a more beautiful realization than theirs’.

It was seven years ago that Harold C Schonberg, in *The New York Times*, wrote of the coming to New York of Washington Opera's *A Village Romeo and Juliet* production: 'It is done almost entirely by films and projections, with the use of a scrim and an inner screen that give a three-dimensional effect. The staging was something of a break-through then, and so it remains. The films and projections by Ronald Chase, and the imaginative procedures of staging techniques present something that is entirely new in opera'.

That exciting and original production was the work of a partnership between director Frank Corsaro and designer Ronald Chase. The techniques employed in that production were explained in detail in the late John Coveney's article *The Visual Impact of 'A Village Romeo and Juliet' in Washington D.C.* which was reprinted in Delius Society Newsletter No 40 (pp.14-18). Corsaro and Chase's first Delius collaboration had been for the American première of *Koanga*, in Washington on December 18 1970.<sup>1</sup> Two years later they worked on the American *Village Romeo* première, also in Washington, on April 26 1972.<sup>2</sup> And now they have come together for a third Delius American première, of *Fennimore and Gerda* at Saint Louis on June 3 1981.

'I've always been attracted to Frederick Delius,' writes Corsaro in the Saint Louis programme book, '... and have tried to make his music something of a crusade ... *Fennimore and Gerda* is a somewhat different kind of challenge [from *Koanga* and *A Village Romeo*], one Ron Chase and I have been wanting to do for years; it was back in 1971 that we started talking to Richard Gaddes about it at Santa Fe.'

Gaddes, an Englishman formerly with Santa Fe Opera, is now general director of the Opera Theatre of Saint Louis where in six years of enterprise and imagination he has established a company of considerable repute, placing it — in the words of the *Financial Times* — 'firmly and boldly on the opera-goer's international map'. Perhaps the candle-lit picnic dinners on the tree-studded theatre lawn were responsible for *The Times's* suggestion of it being an 'American Glyndebourne'. From Saint Louis in 1978 came BBCTV's *Albert Herring*. Next year the Opera Theatre makes its first visit abroad, taking *Die Zauberflöte* to Monte Carlo, and Jonathan Miller is to make his U.S. debut with *Così fan tutte*. In this year's month-long season *Fennimore and Gerda* shared the evening with Wolf-Ferrari's *The Secret of Suzanne* for four performances.

In the programme book (which also included an extract from Christopher Redwood's article on Delius's operas in *A Delius Companion*) Corsaro briefly outlined his approach to this opera:

Delius was fascinated by the naturalistic possibilities of stage behaviour; he had Ibsen a great deal in mind, I think, when he wrote *Fennimore and Gerda*. When he first saw it staged (in Frankfurt, ten years after it was written) it was in a highly realistic production with 'a beech forest in ... autumn, a dark old garden with the little harbour, a lighthouse, and water in the distance — a scene in the snow and ice frozen fjord at night ...' (his wife's account). Delius is on record as thinking this production was perfect, and clearly, he intended the intervals between the eleven scenes [Delius called them 'pictures'] not only to show the passage of time but to allow for changes of scenery. But with all its naturalistic intent and the very specific

directions in its text, the opera is still oblique about what motivates the characters; it is a sort of Nordic *Jules and Jim* without the humour. So we have filled the interludes with further sketches of what the people are like, using natural sounds – seagulls, waves – with projections and some mime, not only to create an environment and a poetic mood but to further develop the relationships between the characters and, hopefully, to create an interesting form. I don't know of another opera that has been treated in quite this way.

Nicholas Kenyon, in *The New Yorker*, thought the opera 'acquired a cogency and dramatic force' he had not thought possible:

Frank Corsaro has taken Delius's word 'picture' as the metaphor for his whole production . . . Instead of making the scenes continuous or allowing the short pauses that Delius directs, Mr Corsaro adds 'pictures' of his own. These make explicit the development that Delius's story line takes for granted. We see in short, mimed tableaux Fennimore's disillusionment with Erik after they marry; Erik's lack of success as a painter and his increasing boorishness towards his wife; Niels' frequent, solicitous presence. Some of these additions are accompanied by the most controversial parts of the production: natural noises, and filmed projections on the gauze. We see Danish rooftops and hear tolling bells; water ripples and gurgles; birds sing; sunlight streams through tree branches . . . Some of the interludes are too long, too indulgent; some are irrelevant; and a couple of sound effects spoil the music by cutting into it at the ends of scenes. But the over-all effect is to conjure up an atmosphere that unifies the drama.

Not all critics found dramatic equilibrium between such disparate elements in the production. *The Kansas City Star* thought that Corsaro and Chase 'ingeniously but unconvincingly tried to patch the disjointed episodes together with projections and pantomimes', while the *Dallas Morning News* felt that such additions only created distractions and 'weakened rather than reinforced the opera's impact'. The only note of censure came from William Mootz of the *Courier-Journal* who, while admitting that Corsaro had given 'the slender plot a dramatic coherence scarcely hinted at in the libretto' and commenting on the 'extraordinary beauty' of the projected nature scenes, thought that 'one may question the ethics of Corsaro's methods, especially when some of the action he devises requires additional music patched together from Delius's score by conductor Keene'. (He seems to have been the only critic to suggest that musically there had been any departure from the printed score.)

But most critics were completely won over. Byron Belt, in the *Staten Island Sunday Advance*, called it 'visually stunning and musically superb . . . Corsaro and film director Ronald Chase transformed an opera of modest interest into compelling music theatre'. For James Wierzbioki of the *St Louis Globe-Memorial* it was 'one of the most compelling examples of contemporary stage artistry' he had ever encountered. He doubted that 'in a "standard" production Delius's syrupy music and maudlin libretto, no matter how forceful the performance, could sustain the interest of a modern audience. As conceived and realised by Corsaro and Chase, however, *Fennimore and Gerda* approaches the level of

a masterpiece — absolutely riveting from start to finish, and extraordinarily beautiful, too.'

There was generally high praise for the conductor Christopher Keene and the principal singers. In all, it was an outstanding artistic success: 'Three Premières, Three Hits' was how the headline in *Time* magazine summed up the season. The *Fennimore* première had an added sense of occasion in the presence of Dr Fenby at St Louis where 'he was the star of the week, lecturing on his Delius experiences and in general endearing himself to everyone by his gentle modesty as much as his authority'. He was the subject of a profile in *The New York Times*. 'What everyone at the St Louis performances . . . wondered was how Eric Fenby would take the production', wrote Donal Henahan. 'Mr Fenby approved. And so did almost everyone else.'

1. see Delius Society Newsletter Nos. 30-32 for cast list and reviews.

2. see Delius Society Newsletter Nos. 36-37 for cast list and reviews.

(The Editor is extremely grateful to Mr Richard Gaddes and his staff at the Opera Theatre of Saint Louis for making available copies of the programme book and a selection of national and international press reviews. Thanks are also due to Robert Threlfall and Estelle Palmley for providing additional material. A pocket score of *Fennimore and Gerda* is available from Boosey & Hawkes, price £9.00.)

## Tales of Adventure

### Barrie Iliffe's talk to the Midlands Branch

London has already had an opportunity to hear Barrie Iliffe's intriguing reconstruction of the background to *Eventyr*. Midlands members therefore gathered at Ravensdale, Weston Underwood, on the 28th March in a mood of anticipation that was well rewarded. Mr Iliffe's professional credentials are impressive and lent a certain authority to the discourse, but his disarming style set us all at ease and enhanced the enjoyment of an absorbing evening. His enterprise and research in investigating the origins of the work are to be applauded.

The meaning of the word 'Eventyr' in Norwegian, given F.D.'s own equivocal use of the alternative title 'Once upon a time', seems to be an important key. For one thing, it can be singular or plural. The translation alternatives 'adventure' or 'tales' certainly suggest that the work may well not be a programme piece on a single subject, but a fantasy based on strands of different stories and situations. This view is supported by Rosa Newmarch, the critic, who said as much in her programme note for the first performance of *Eventyr* in 1919.

These legendary happenings were the object of Mr Iliffe's quest. A most impressive part of this was his narrowing down of a possible one hundred and thirty-four editions of the Peter Christen Asbjornsen works, in four languages, to three in Norwegian, of 1896, 1909 and 1911. One of these would seem to have been the text with which Delius was familiar. Jelka Delius, in letters to Philip Heseltine around the time of the 1929 festival and to Eric Fenby, men-

tions their readings from a Norwegian copy of Asbjornsen during the long winter evenings of 1914-15 – significantly close to the emergence of the composition. She refers particularly to the story of the boy lost in the forest and the girl seized after a wedding party. Both these incidents were identified in the *Eventyr* score – weird ‘metallic’ sounds (use of cymbals, rare in Delius, and other percussive tones) that seem to surround the wandering boy:

I was seized by an indescribable fear; these sounds sent a chill through me, and my terror was increased by the darkness between the trees, where all objects appeared distorted, moving and alive, stretching forth thousands of hands and arms after the stray wanderer . . . In thoughtless and breathless fear I rushed forward to avoid this host of demons, but while flying thus still more frightful and distorted shapes appeared, and I fancied I felt their hands clutching me . . .<sup>1</sup>

and the rapid 12/8 tempo, ‘furiously’ in the score, marking the wild dance of the brownie with the girl.

A careful examination of F.D.’s orchestration confirmed Fenby’s view that the strings represent the simple peasantry in the mountain villages, while the woodwind comes to the fore when trolls and under-earthlings are about. Various examples added weight to this reading. Mr Iliffe’s *tour de force* was to pinpoint the origin of the famous wild shouts that twice punctuate the latter half of the piece. No-one finally doubted his interpretation of these as definitive of the chase in the story of the poor widow’s son and the troll’s magic horse:

So when the lad had got on the horse, off they went at such a rate, he couldn’t at all tell how they went. But when he had ridden awhile, the horse said, ‘I think I hear a noise; look around! Can you see anything?’ ‘Yes; there are ever so many coming after us, at least a score,’ said the lad. ‘Aye, aye, that’s the Troll coming,’ said the horse; ‘now he’s after us with his pack.’<sup>2</sup>

The runaway is pursued by ‘at least a score’ – Delius’s marking is specifically for twenty male voices – and the galloping cross-rhythms underline the scene.

References to a number of the tales could clearly be only fragmentary, but Delius used certain incidents as triggers for his invention, natural musical development then taking over.

The excerpts used as illustrations were from the reissued 1934 and 1951 Beecham recordings, the whole of the former being played as a prelude to the talk. It was notable that quite a number of members present had attended the Bradford Festival performance of *Eventyr* by the RPO under Rudolf Kempe in 1962.

A measure of the success of any Midlands meeting is the extent to which subsequent discussion of the subject survives the postlude of prandial indulgence so regularly afforded. On this occasion Mr Iliffe and Wenda Williams were well matched, having each provided a spread of delightful substance not to be forgotten.

E E Rowe

1. Asbjornsen’s *A Summer Night in Krokskogen Forest*, translated Braekstad. Delius’s *Eventyr*: full score p 9 bar 1 to p 14 bar 8?
2. Asbjornsen & Moe’s *The Widow’s Son*, translated Dasent. Delius’s *Eventyr*: full score p 24 bar 5 to p 31 bar 4?

## Delius: A Song of Summer

Softly fall the bittersweet chords  
 Shadings, nuances, subtlest of harmonies  
     blending into an answer  
 Silent waving trees, flowers, summer gardens  
     redolent with their perfume, quiet ponds  
 Cicadas, birds with sundown messages,  
     the nearly-full orange moon  
 All becoming one in the languid and easy warmth  
     of a midsummer night  
 Evocative of long ago twilights and of memories  
 The gorgeousness of sound paints the picture  
     sharper than any photograph. It is poignant.  
 It is joy.  
 For here at once is understanding of the beauty  
     which surrounds us  
 It is reckoning and it is desire. It is true fulfilment  
 There is a message for those who will listen  
 Once heard and accepted, we will know a quiet peace  
     and a pervading awareness of our greatest  
     emotions brought to fruition  
 And we will never be quite the same again.

Keith Marvin

## 'A Mass of Life' at Cambridge

July 25th 1981

It was Philip Heseltine who wrote of the *Mass of Life* that 'one can imagine a more spiritually enlightened generation performing it as a solemn ritual in some gigantic open-air theatre, year after year at the coming-in of summer'. Nothing could seem farther from Heseltine's imaginings than the ecclesiastical confines of King's College Chapel. Today the atheistic creed of the Nietzschean text need not give cause to any objection to the Mass's performance in such hallowed surroundings (remembering the past difficulties, for varying textual reasons, of works like the *Dream of Gerontius* and *Belshazzar's Feast* in gaining acceptance at the Three Choirs Festival). The only doubts one may have had beforehand over the choice of the Mass for the 1981 Cambridge Festival concerned a practical consideration – the building's acoustics.

And as it turned out the greatest disappointment of the evening was the opening chorus – through no fault of the performance, but quite simply that the ear was not prepared for the cruel tricks the reverberation of the Chapel played on choir and orchestra alike, robbing their attack of any incisiveness



and clarity. How preferable a dry out-of-door acoustic seemed then! Surely few in the audience, unless thoroughly accustomed to the Chapel's idiosyncracies, would have agreed with Felix Aprahamian writing in the *Sunday Times* that 'the glorious surroundings embraced and enhanced its sounds . . . lovingly'.

Apart from the tenor soloist and the orchestra coming a bar adrift near the beginning of the third number, it would be unfair to attempt any detailed assessment of the qualities of the performance with a critical ear having first to unscramble the confusion of sounds. One would have welcomed an opportunity to hear the performance again under closely-miked broadcasting conditions, for the overall shape of Tim Brown's interpretation was most pleasing. The soloists with the Cambridge Philharmonic Society (singing in German) were Mary Wells, Josephine Nendick, Richard Lewis and Nigel Wickens. The programme booklet contained a helpful and perceptive commentary on the work by James Day.

## Forthcoming Events

Tuesday October 27 at 7.30 p.m. Leicester

Eric Fenby, OBE speaks on 'Delius as I knew him' to the East Midlands Branch of the Elgar Society. 3rd floor Charles Wilson Building, University of Leicester, Mayor's Walk, University Road, Leicester.

Tuesday November 3 at 8 p.m. Zurich Opera House

First performance this season of *A Village Romeo and Juliet*. Further performances have been announced for November 10, 24, 26; December 1, 8, 15; and January 5.

Saturday November 7 at 8 p.m. 'Ravensdale', Bullhurst Lane, Weston Underwood  
A Midlands Branch meeting: John Bird talks on 'The Friendship between Percy Grainger and Frederick Delius'.

Sunday November 8 at 3 p.m. Cliffs Pavilion, Southend

The Southend Festival Chorus and Orchestra, conducted by Lionel Friend, perform Delius's *Sea Drift*. Seats £3.00, £2.50, £2.00 and £1.50.

Thursday November 19 at 7.00 p.m. RCM, Prince Consort Road, London SW7

Delius's *Eventyr*. Norman Del Mar conducts the RCM Symphony Orchestra. Works by Mozart, Walton (Cello Concerto) and Strauss (*Sinfonia Domestica*) complete the programme.

Thursday November 26 at 7 p.m. BMIC, 10 Stratford Place, London W1

Delius Society talk: 'A E Housman and English Music' presented by Peter Trotman.

Sunday November 29 The Pavilion, Hemel Hempstead

Delius's *Sea Drift* performed by the Aeolian Singers and the New Westminster Philharmonic Orchestra, conducted by Ian Butler. Elgar's *Cockaigne* Overture and Walton's *Belshazzar's Feast* complete the programme.

Saturday December 12 at 8 p.m. 'Lawrenny Gate', Burley Drive, Quarndon, Derby

A Midlands Branch meeting: Professor Ian Parrott talks on 'Elgar's Enigma Solved'.

## 1982

Friday January 29 at 7.30 p.m. Mary Ward House, 5-7 Tavistock Place, London WC1

Delius Society meeting: 'An evening with Eric Fenby'.

Tuesday February 23 at 7.30 p.m. Mary Ward House, London WC1

Delius Society talk: 'The Philadelphia tapes — a documentary survey' presented by Felix Aprahamian, a Vice-President of the Society.

Monday March 8 — Sunday March 14 University of Keele

The Fourth Delius Festival. Full details are given on an enclosed leaflet. Further information may be obtained from Brian Rawlins, University of Keele, Staffordshire ST5 5B6 (tel. 0782-621111).

Tuesday March 9 at 7.30 p.m. Town Hall, Birmingham

Delius's *Sea Drift* (soloist David Wilson-Johnson) with Walton's *Improvisations on an Impromptu of Benjamin Britten* and Holst's *The Planets*. Sir Charles Groves conducts the CBSO and Chorus. Box Office tel. 021-236 3889.

Tuesday March 16 Philharmonic Hall, Liverpool

Delius's *Paris*, with Strauss's *Till Eulenspiegel* and Brahms's First Piano Concerto (soloist Garrick Ohlsson). Norman Del Mar conducts the RLPO.



